

[The Arizona Republic](#)

U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell of Tempe said Friday that people have become "angry and very frustrated" with federal government, which has become characterized by a lack of civility and inaction.

"Everybody's frustrated," he said during his State of the District Address for the Tempe Chamber of Commerce. "Democrats are frustrated because they feel like they can't get anything done. Republicans are frustrated that they are in the minority and can't get what they want done. Independents are angry because the changes they expected to see when they went to the polls have not come about. The president's supporters believe he hasn't been forceful enough or done enough . . . while others are angry and energized because they think that he and the Congress have over-reached and done too much."

"I suppose you can say anger and frustration are bipartisan, since it's about the only thing folks can agree on right now."

Despite all the frustration, Mitchell said his goal continues to be to work with Republicans and Democrats in 2010 to try to "try and get things done."

Mitchell said improving the economy and creating jobs are the most important issues facing the country this year. While expressing confidence that the nation will pull out of the downturn, he said Congress needs to make changes to get the recovery right. He expressed special concern about the amount of spending and debt run up by Congress.

"I am frustrated, and I have expressed that frustration in the best way that a member of Congress can, including often voting against my party. I have voted against the past three Democratic budgets. I voted against an additional \$200 billion in spending in the fiscal year 2010 appropriations bills. I voted against releasing \$350 billion of TARP bank bailout funds because I was concerned by the lack of oversight. I opposed the auto bailout, as well as recent attempts to raise the debt ceiling."

He also said the country needs a "fair and predictable tax structure that encourages investment and doesn't throw cold water on the recovery." He said he has been pushing a bipartisan bill to permanently extend the Bush-era cuts to estate and capital gains taxes, set to expire this year.

"Raising capital gains taxes discourages investment, and raising the estate tax hurts families who own homes and small businesses. That just doesn't make sense, especially not right now," he said.

Mitchell said he continues to support federal health care reform despite the difficulties the legislation faces in Congress.

"I've met too many people out there who have been denied coverage for pre-existing conditions, or whose premiums make the health insurance they have basically inaccessible," Mitchell said during his State of the District Address for the Tempe Chamber of Commerce. "I also met with many small business owners who, because of rising premiums, were losing money, losing employees, and losing their competitive edge."

Mitchell said he shares concerns about the version passed by the U.S. Senate and its fiscal impact on Arizona and other states, but the legislation is too important to abandon. "I think that the goal of reducing costs and trying to help millions of Americans gain and retain access to healthcare -- which I equate with basic human dignity -- is a good one," he said.

The legislation was dealt a potentially fatal blow this month with the election in Massachusetts of Sen. Scott Brown, who is considered the vote Republicans need to block passage of the legislation in the Senate.